



INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

The National Centre for Collaboration

LESSON PLAN

Date: _____



Indigenous Ways of Knowing & Being

Indigenous Education in a Catholic School Setting: A Case Study on Best Practices in Indigenization in a K to 6 Primary School Setting (St. David Catholic Elementary School)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Please read this Acknowledgement before the start of this lesson to respect the knowledge that is being shared and the Land of the People where the knowledge originates.

With great respect, we would like to acknowledge the elders and traditional knowledge holders who shared their wisdom and guidance in the making of this film. We wholeheartedly extend our appreciation for the opportunity to live and learn on the territory of the Anishinaabe Peoples, ancestors and all of creation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this lesson plan, students will be able to:

It is hoped that both the film and this interpretive guide will be helpful to schools in their efforts at integrating Indigenous knowledge into their organizational culture and into their curriculum development through a consideration of the main themes of this work. *Please see Teacher's Guide, Background/Foundational Information Section below for a summary of the main themes of this work.*

LIST OF ACTIVITIES

1. Watch Video and Read Teachers' Guide

MATERIALS

- Video: 'Eskibak' New Beginnings: St. David Catholic

Origin

St. David Catholic Elementary School
Sudbury
Ontario

Learning Level / Grade

Professional Development/Continuing Education

1800 mins

Related Subjects

Traditional Medicines

DESCRIPTION

As a companion text to the documentary video created for the St. David Catholic Elementary School, this case study guide on best practices in Indigenous education highlights some of the key themes that emerged from the teacher and staff interviews and from the making of the film overall. We hope that both the film and this interpretive guide will be helpful to schools in their efforts at integrating Indigenous knowledge into their curriculum and organizational culture overall.

Note: Please see Teacher's Guide, Background/Foundational Information section below for a summary of the main themes of this work.

HOLISM AND ALL OUR RELATIONS

This lesson plan has been developed with an Indigenous lens that is holistic in nature, a way of being and knowing that acknowledges our relationships with 'all our relations', including plants and animals, other human beings, the water, land, wind, sun, moon, stars, and more - everything seen and unseen. With 'all our relations' in mind, this lesson plan has been developed with a focus on:

- Language and Culture
- Participatory and experiential learning activities
- Intergenerational learning with Elders/Knowledge Holders
- Relationship with family, ancestors
- Different learning styles; attention given to mind, body, and spirit
- Connections are made with everyday life
- Nurturing healthy relationships in school and community
- Ethics in the classroom: care, truthfulness and trust, respect, integrity
- Healthy relationship with self and identity
- Relationship with the land
- Personal reflection time (connecting with thoughts and feelings)

TEACHERS' GUIDE

Background/Foundational Information

- In assisting schools in their efforts at integrating Indigenous knowledge into their own organizational culture and curriculum development, a discussion on the following themes may prove helpful when considering the possibilities of Indigenous education in your specific context.

The key themes include:

- 1) The critical role of a dedicated and supportive principal that is either from the local Indigenous community or closely allied with it and who understands that Indigenous education is grounded in the nurturing of long-term, respectful and trusting relationships with local Elders, Knowledge Holders, and community members who work in the school and who nurture community partnerships and family involvement.
- 2) The importance of operating the school in a culturally appropriate and affirming way that is guided by local Elders, Knowledge holders, and community members such that students are able to clearly see the valuing of Indigenous teachers, knowledge, and cultural practices in their day to day surroundings. This is essential to supporting the cultural identity and spirit of Indigenous students while counteracting long-standing negative stereotypes.

Culturally supportive representation can take many forms including: the community based design of the building, a privileging of Indigenous art and symbolism in all areas of the school, the prominence of Indigenous languages in signage and in overall school communications, and the prominence of ceremonial spaces and medicine gardens within the school and on the grounds.

- 3) There is an overall feeling that a visitor gets when they enter the front doors at St David. In keeping with the local Anishnaabe cultural practices, the teachers and staff are friendly and helpful and laughter can often be heard in the hallways and an overall feeling of playfulness is apparent.

4) That students feel safe, respected, and loved is central to Indigenous education at St David and understood as the basis of student attendance, learning outcomes, and their overall ability to succeed.

5) As an elementary school dedicated to Indigenous education, the provincial curriculum taught at St David is adapted to local Anishnaabe education philosophies and practices. Grounded within the ethic of respect for the whole person (mind, body, and spirit), teaching at St David is student driven, inquiry based, and encompassing of outdoor experiential education opportunities.

In response to the learning needs and interests of the students, Elders, Knowledge Holders and teachers help the students along their learning paths both in the classroom, out in the school grounds, and on school trips to a diversity of natural environments.

ACTIVITIES

1 - Watch Video and Read Teachers' Guide

Purpose

It is hoped that both the video and the interpretive guide provided in the 'Teachers' Guide' will be helpful to schools in their efforts at integrating Indigenous knowledge into their organizational culture and into their curriculum development through a consideration of the main themes of this work. Please see Teacher's Guide, Background/Foundational Information Section below for a summary of the main themes of this work.

Time: 1800 mins

Activity Instructions

1. Watch the video entitled: 'Eskibak' New Beginnings: St David Catholic Elementary School, N'swakamok - Sudbury, Ontario.
2. Read the Teachers' Guide.
3. Hold follow-up discussions and plan next steps.

Materials

Click the 'Link' to open and view videos.

To open and print files, please go to the 'files' folder accompanying this downloaded lesson plan.

Resource Title	Type
Video: 'Eskibak' New Beginnings: St. David Catholic	Link ⚡

This film is a case study on best practices in Indigenous education in a K to 6 Primary Catholic School Setting. As an elementary school dedicated to Indigenous education, the provincial curriculum taught at St David is adapted to local Anishnaabe education philosophies and practices. Grounded within the ethic of respect for the whole person (mind, body, and spirit), teaching at St David is student driven, inquiry based, and encompassing of outdoor experiential education opportunities. In response to the learning needs and interests of the students, Elders, Knowledge Holders and teachers help the students along their learning paths both in the classroom, out in the school grounds, and on school trips to a diversity of natural environments.

TEACHING NOTES

ASSESSMENT

This section contains information for assessing progress in students' learning. While Indigenous approaches to assessment may be highlighted, conventional assessment methods may also be discussed.

As an elementary school dedicated to Indigenous education, the provincial curriculum taught at St David is adapted to local Anishnaabe education philosophies and practices. Grounded within the ethic of respect for the whole person (mind, body, and spirit), teaching at St David is student driven, inquiry based, and encompassing of outdoor experiential education opportunities. In response to the learning needs and interests of the students, Elders, Knowledge Holders and teachers help the students along their learning paths both in the classroom, out in the school grounds, and on school trips to a diversity of natural environments.

Assessment within an Indigenous educational context such as this is co-determined by the student, the Elder and Knowledge Holder, and the teacher in keeping with the student's needs, abilities, and goals.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Click the 'Link' to open and view videos.

To open and print files, please go to the 'files' folder accompanying this downloaded lesson plan.

Resource Title	Type
Mike Nadjiwon - Elder who works for the Environment and People	Link ⚡
Dawn Wemungwans - Principal at St. Davids	Link ⚡
Stan & Sharla Peltier - Language teachers, working with students.	Link ⚡
Will Morin	Link ⚡
A community member who's children attend St. Davids. He is very involved with St. Davids as well as at Laurentian University. Will has been with St. Davids since the beginning and is always advocating for community involvement.	
Laurie Stewart - Language Teacher	Link ⚡
Dominic Beaudry	Link ⚡
Pamela Toulouse	Link ⚡
Julia Pegahmagabow	Link ⚡

HOLISM AND ALL OUR RELATIONS

This lesson plan has been developed with an Indigenous lens that is holistic in nature, a way of being and knowing that acknowledges our relationships with 'all our relations', including plants and animals, other human beings, the water, land, wind, sun, moon, stars, and more - everything seen and unseen. With 'all our relations' in mind, this lesson plan has been developed with a focus on:

Relationship with the land

In response to the learning needs and interests of the students, Elders, Knowledge Holders and teachers help the students along their learning paths through regular outside teaching in the school grounds and on school trips to a diversity of natural environments. Students nurture their relationships with the land and water as they become increasingly aware and ask questions about the many living things that live outside, the ways in which the climate is changing, and their role in caring for themselves in relations to all living things.

Participatory and experiential learning activities

Language and Culture

The Anishnaabemowin language is taught at St David and is also spoken throughout the school, sometimes in small ways as the teachers are learning as well. The Anishnaabemowin language is also prominent in signage throughout the school.

Relationship with family, ancestors

St. David strives to be an inclusive and welcoming space accessible to all community members. In building supportive social networks for its students, St David has an open door policy that encourages siblings, parents and guardians, and extended family members to come and attend their many activities. There are regular social gathering such as drumming groups, beading circles, and gardening activities etc.. as well the annual Christmas dinner is an important annual community gathering for everyone.

Connections are made with everyday life

An as inner city school, the teachers and staff at St David understand the daily challenges that many of their students face. In cooperation with parents and guardians, school support services are tailored to meet specific needs relating to safety, nutrition, and wellness.

Intergenerational learning with Elders/Knowledge Holders

Were Elders or Knowledge Holders involved in the development of this Lesson Plan? Yes
Can Elders or Knowledge Holders be invited to help teach part of this lesson plan? Yes

Intergenerational learning with Elders/Knowledge Holders

Ethics in the classroom: care, truthfulness and trust, respect, integrity

That students feel safe, respected, and loved is central to Indigenous education at St David and understood as the basis of student attendance, learning outcomes, and their overall ability to succeed. Grounded within the ethic of respect for the whole person (mind, body, and spirit), teaching at St David is student driven and inquiry based. At St David, students learn to care for themselves as well as their peers, teachers and community members. The fostering of trusting relationships is central to this ability to care and it is evident at St David in the many ways that the teachers and staff help and support students along their unique learning paths.

Different learning styles; attention given to mind, body, and spirit

Healthy relationship with self and identity

Essential to supporting the cultural identity and spirit of Indigenous students while counteracting long-standing racist imagery, St David school operates in a culturally appropriate and affirming way such that students are able to clearly see the valuing of Indigenous teachers, knowledge, and cultural practices in their day to day surroundings.

Through student driven, inquiry based learning at St David, the identities of all students are nurtured as students look within themselves to find their own interests and passions. Knowing the stories of one's family, community, and cultural heritage is also essential to teaching at St David as this fosters communication, relationship building with parents and grandparents as part of a student's life long learning journey.

Personal reflection time (connecting with thoughts and feelings)

The ability to empathize with others is central to the practice of Indigenous education at St David. That students feel safe, respected, and loved is only possible if staff, teachers, and students are encouraged to empathize with each other. This ability to bring feelings and understanding together is facilitated at St David through the privileging of experiential, holistic (mind, body, spirit) teaching on the land with trusted Elders and Knowledge Holders.

OTHER DETAILS

This is a companion text to the documentary video created for the St. David Catholic Elementary School. As an interpretive guide, it is intended to assist schools in their efforts at integrating Indigenous knowledge into their curriculum and organizational culture overall.

Meets curriculum expectations or outcomes for:

Ontario

This is a companion text to the documentary video created for the St. David Catholic Elementary School. As an interpretive guide, it is intended to assist schools in their efforts at integrating Indigenous knowledge into their curriculum and organizational culture overall.

CONTRIBUTORS

Name	Role/Job Title	Place
Dawn Marie Wemigwans	Principal, St. David Catholic Elementary School	Sudbury, ON
Ginette Toivonen	Indigenous Lead, Sudbury Catholic District School Board	Sudbury, ON
Dawn Fielding	Native Language Teacher, St. David Catholic Elementary School	Sudbury, ON
Will Morin	Parent and Community Member	Sudbury, ON
Terri-Lynn Lepage	Grade 3 Teacher, St. David Catholic Elementary School	Sudbury, ON
Lynsie Royer	Grade 1 Teacher, St. David Catholic Elementary School	Sudbury, ON
Joel Agowissa	Indigenous Support Worker, Sudbury District Catholic School Board	Sudbury, ON
Vince Pawis	Elder, St. David Catholic Elementary School	Sudbury, ON
Jennifer Gran-Peltier	Kindergarten Teacher, St. David Catholic Elementary School	Sudbury, ON
Jim Eshkawkogan	Community Partner, Better Beginnings Better Futures	Sudbury, ON
Brandon Gray	Filmmaker	Sudbury, ON
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Ashley Nadjiwon	NCCIE Project Assistant	Sudbury, ON

QUESTIONS/MORE DETAILS

For Questions contact: [Kevin Fitzmaurice \(kfitzmaurice@usudbury.ca\)](mailto:kfitzmaurice@usudbury.ca) for more information.